

Preparing for War in a Modular Unit

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On 10 May 2009, the 573rd Clearance Company, 2d Engineer Battalion left White Sands Missile Range to train with the 1st Engineer Battalion at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, CA. The 573rd is attached to the 1st EN BN for a November 2009 OIF deployment. Following a late March field exercise at Fort Riley where the two units trained on convoy operations, night operations and route clearance operations; NTC was the second time the two units have been able to train together, prior to their deployment.

While at NTC, the 573rd trained on combat patrols, escalation of force, rules of engagement, reacting to an IED, RKG, VBIED, and HBIED. The company was also able to train with route clearance vehicles, such as the Buffalo and Husky, robots, and integrated a company COIST into daily operations, and also learned biometrics by inputting people into the BAT/HIIDE system. While on missions, 573rd patrols were faced with downed vehicles, sniper attacks, civilians on the battlefield, and acquiring high value targets. On several occasions, patrols had to respond to friendly units needing route clearance assistance. Patrols had to coordinate assistance in evacuating casualties and using battle space owner EOD assets as well.

The 573rd also participated in a Working IED Defeat Group. The group met 2-3 times a week and would discuss all IED encounters over the past 24 hours. With the information, the group would create products that would help predict the next attack, detect patterns in attacks, and develop patrol schedules based on intelligence collected and analyzed from attacks. The 573rd would send one representative to the group to brief their 24 hours significant acts and to assist in the IED Defeat process.

On 13 Jun 09, the 573rd Clearance Company flew back home to White Sands Missile Range. Their NTC rotation strengthened not only their combat skills, but gave them a substantial amount of experience in human interaction on and off the battlefield. The key point was the ability for the 573rd and 1st EN BN to work together at the operational level, establish functional TTP's and strengthen their war-fighting team of teams. Currently, the 573rd completed recovery operations and will be taking block leave.

The 573rd Clearance Company will link up with the 1st EN BN in Kuwait this November to begin their yearlong combat tour in support of OIF.



2LT Jason Adams and PV2 Jakory Payton prepare to depart White Sands Missile Range enroute to NTC (Fort Erwin, CA) for NTC. 2LT Adams and PV2 Payton are part of the 573rd Clearance Company. (13 May 09)



573rd Clearance Company Soldiers return to WSMR after a month long NTC rotation. At NTC, the 573rd had an opportunity to train with the unit they will be working with in OIF, the 1st Engineer Battalion. (10 Jun 09)



SPC Israel Alvarez and PV2 Alex Speckler conduct a route clearance training mission during the 2d Engineer Battalion FTX OPERATION KEYSTONE conducted 12 – 17 Jul 09. SPC Alvarez and PV2 Speckler are part of the 40th Mobility Augmentation Company which is scheduled to deploy to OIF later this winter. (16 Jul 09)



PFC Tim Berger (Rear) and PV2 Arcadio Bennett (Front) enhance perimeter security at Orogrande Outpost during OPERATION KEYSTONE, the 2d Engineer Battalion Field Exercise held 12-17 Jul 09. Both Soldiers are Engineers assigned to Headquarters and Headquarter Company, 2d EN BN. (15 Jul 09)